

COSTA RICA

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PASO PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE CAMPAIGNS FOR CHANGE

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Candidates of the Socialist Action Party, PASO, campaigned very successfully through the regions of Parrita and Quepos. The campaign tour included visits and meetings in Pueblo Nuevo, Damas Island, Pasito, and Palo Seco on the 7, 8 and 9th of January 1973.

On the program for these stops were the candidates for delegate from Puntarenas province, Comrades Arnoldo Ferreto and Victor Mora; the pre-candidate for councilman from Quepos, Comrade Roman Guevara; and Comrade Eduardo Mora Valverde, undersecretary general of the party.

Due to illness, Comrade Ferreto could not attend, and at every stop the candidates expressed their hope for the recovery of this great revolutionary fighter so he could immediately rejoin the campaign activities.

The local leader of each town also spoke, introducing the speakers and reporting on local problems.

Comrade Eduardo Mora Valverde, in the name of the Party's national leadership, explained PASO's general platform and referred to the specific problems of each area.

PASO's Position on Vesco and Other Investors

In Pueblo Nuevo, when asked about the much-debated problem of Vesco and his associates, Mora explained the Party's position regarding foreign investments. "We are against those imperialist thieves who come to carry away the country's riches in the form of royalties, commissions, interest payments, dividends, payment of 'technical' services, and profits; who evade national laws by claiming special concessions; who intervene in our internal affairs by shaping the country's political development to the advantage of foreign interests and humiliating us and carrying corruption to all corners of society. Politicians of the so-called Government opposition now appear in the Vesco case to be horrified at the prospects of the investments this international

gangster is making. Yet these politicians of the 'opposition' are directly responsible for and are accomplices to all the crimes against the national economy and against our national honor which have been committed by foreign investors in recent years. For example, they are responsible for the repugnant and unpatriotic concessions made to ALCOA against which the entire country protested. These protests, however, fell on deaf ears."

Our Beaches Handed Over to Yankee Companies

On Damas Island, where many peasant families farm without title deeds, Comrade Mora referred to information given him by the farmers stating that attempts were being made to throw them off this land in order to hand over the beautiful beaches to tourist interests, especially to North American investors.

Mora analyzed Costa Rica's agrarian problem extensively to sum up the necessity of authentic agrarian reform: that the latifundia be given to the peasant, that he be extended credit and given technical assistance, and that these efforts be the beginning of a profound revolutionary process leading toward socialism. "Our Party will lead you in defending this island's coasts against the greed of North American tourist partnerships and from lack of self-respect of our politicians."

Traditional Parties "Have Had Their Chance"

In Pasito, which is also an area of squatters and very poor peasants with title deeds, Mora explained how his Party had fought over the years for laws which would help both the peasants without land and those with plots of inadequate size. "Thanks to our fight during the term of Calderon Guardia, the Council on Production was formed. Its purpose was to guarantee agricultural producers not only the sale of their crops but also fair prices. But in the hands of bourgeois governments, the Council does not perform the duties we entrusted to it. It now, rather, acts as an intermediary which extorts from the small farmer and is an instrument of the great land owners and merchants. The case of the Nationalized Bank is similar or worse. The National Liberation Party said that nationalization was to guarantee broad, and very inexpensive credit to the country's producers of wealth. But Liberation has neither been able to structure the Bank adequately because of intervening interests nor change its character from that of a lucrative institution with private interests. The people are fighting for good laws. These laws can at least be passed by the Legislature and approved by the Chief Executive, yet in the end, the capitalistic State is incapable of carrying them out to benefit the people and independent economic development. That is why it is necessary to seize power from the two political forces, National Liberation and its opposition, which have alternately governed, and let the workers, peasants, artisans, officeholders, students, progressive intellectuals, in short, the authentic forces of the country, take control." That is PASO's mission in this campaign, and that is why it has selected Manuel Mora Valverde as its candidate for President of the Republic.

Forty Years Fighting the United Fruit Company

At the Banana Company's estate, Palo Seco, Mora began by saying that he was not at the estate now because of the elections. "We are not an elected Party. We are a Party that permanently leads the workers. If today, for example, workers of this company receive their pay in cash, have homes, and have serum against snakebite, in short, face fewer problems than before, it is because of the struggles of our Party, which began in 1931 in the banana zones on the Atlantic. The Party led the workers in 1934 in the first strike against the United Fruit Co. in the Caribbean, under the direction of Carlos Luis Fallas, Arnaldo Ferreto and other comrades. It has kept fighting each day of the year for the wage earner against the foreign monopolies and for the economic welfare of workers. We do not come to beg for votes. We are traveling around the entire country, town by town, factory by factory, estate by estate, helping workers to open their eyes, to raise their consciousness, to organize themselves in their unions and in the Party and to arise and advance in defense of their rights. The Party will always be at the head of workers who fight for their welfare and against injustices. Nothing or no one can make it retreat."

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